

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 20486

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, IT
SUBJECT: PCI CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING: COMMENTARY

REF: ROME 20447

1. WHILE IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE TO EXAGGERATE ITS SIGNIFICANCE, THE DEC. 13-14 PCI CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING CONCLUDED ON A NOTE OF APPARENT INCONCLUSIVENESS THAT BOTH WE AND QUALIFIED ITALIAN COMMENTATORS FIND PUZZLING. CALLED TO DISCUSS WAYS OF IMPROVING THE PARTY'S ORGANIZATION THE CC FAILED TO ADOPT THE STRUCTURAL INNOVATIONS PROPOSED BY THE MAIN SPEAKER, BERLINGUER'S NEWLY APPOINTED ORGANIZATIONAL SECTION CHIEF CERVETTI. NO CLEAR LINE EMERGED DURING THE DEBATE IN WHICH UNDERSTONE OF DISSENT AND TENSIONS WERE EVIDENT.

2. ONE IS TEMPTED TO CONCLUDE THAT CERVETTI'S ADDRESS HAD BEEN INTENDED AS A TRAIL BALLOON. VARIOUS PROPOSALS AIMED AT REORIENTING THE PCI ON THE MODEL OF A DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF GOVERNMENT WERE AIDED AND SHELVED "FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION." WHILE IT IS CLEAR THAT
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CERVETTI WAS SPEAKING FOR BERLINGUER, CARE WAS TAKEN NOT TO ASSOCIATE THE PROPOSALS DIRECTLY WITH THE PCI LEADER WHO DID NOT ADDRESS THE MEETING.

3. A POSSIBLE EXPLANATION MAY INVOLVE THE UNDERLYING RATIONALE FOR BERLINGUER'S RINASCITA PROPOSAL.

HAVING ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE PCI HAS NO ALTERNATIVE AT PRESENT OTHER THAN TO SUPPORT THE ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT (A POSITION REINFORCED BY THE DC'S FIRM RESOLVE DURING THEIR RECENT NATIONAL COUNCIL TO HOLD THE LINE AGAINST ANY CHANGE IN THE POLITICAL BALANCE), BERLINGUER MAY WELL PERCEIVE THE PCI AS CAUGHT IN A TRAP OF IMMOBILISM. THE RINASCITA PROPOSAL THEREFORE BECOMES A VEHICLE TO REGAIN THE POLITICAL INITIATIVE, KEEP UP THE FAITH OF THE RANK AND FILE, AND TO PROMOTE THE CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH AN EMERGENCY GOVERNMENT OF ALL DEMOCRATIC PARTIES COULD BECOME INCREASINGLY ACCEPTABLE. AT THE CC, BOTH NAPOLITANO AND CARC RATIONALIZED BERLINGUER'S PROPOSAL IN TERMS OF OVERCOMING THE DC'S PIECE-MEAL "CASE BY CASE" "CONFRONTO".

4. IF THIS LINE OF REASONING IS CORRECT, BERLINGUER MAY WELL HAVE INTENDED TO UTILIZE OBJECTIVE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS TO ATTEMPT A FURTHER SHIFT IN THE PARTY'S "DEMOCRATIC" ORIENTATION. THIS WOULD REQUIRE BOTH IDEOLOGICAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL REVISIONING. THE IDEOLOGICAL DEBATE WITHIN THE PARTY (AND REFLECTED IN THE LEFTIST PRESS) ON "EVOLVING" GRAMSCI'S THEORIES ON "HEGEMONY" IS ALREADY GOING ON. THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING EVIDENTLY WAS INTENDED TO RESTRUCTURE THE PARTY APPARATUS ALONG MORE DECENTRALIZED, GOVERNMENT-ORIENTED LINE. THIS WAS TO BE DONE UNDER THE UPBAT THEME OF PREPARING THE PARTY FOR THE TASKS OF GOVERNMENT. NAPOLITANO'S AND BARCA'S FRANK DESCRIPTIONS OF THE CONFIDENTIAL

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CPI'S PRESENT DIFFICULTIES AND INCONSISTENCIES SEEM DESIGNED TO SUPPORT THE ARGUMENTS FOR CHANGE.

5. IF BERLINGUER IS MOVING INTO THE DELICATE AREA OF INSTITUTIONAL AND IDEOLOGICAL CHANGE, HE HAS GOOD REASON TO PROCEED WITH CAUTION. THERE ARE, AFTER ALL, MANY IN THE PARTY WHO FIND ANY TAMPERING WITH STRATEGY AND IDEOLOGY AS UNSETTLING. BERLINGUER SEEM TO BE APPROACHING THE PROBLEM BY ADOPTING A MIDDLE POSITION. THE PCI MUST BE BOTH A PARTY OF GOVERNMENT AND A PARTY OF STRUGGLE (THIS INDEED WAS THE CC'S NEW SLOGAN). IN THIS WAY, HE MAY HOPE TO PACIFY THE PCI'S OLD GUARD WHO SPEAK (LIKE COSSUTTA) IN TERMS OF REMAINING TRUE TO "THE PARTY'S ESSENTIAL NATURE" WHILE EDGING THE PARTY TOWARD FURTHER CHANGES. IF SO, THE APPARENTLY INCONCLUSIVE OUTCOME OF THE DECEMBER CC MAY REFLECT THE WEIGHT OF PCI MILITANTS WHO ARE INCREASINGLY TROUBLED BY THE

PARTY'S MODERATE ORIENTATION. BERLINGURE'S POSITON
HOWEVER, IS NOT BEING CHALLENGED, AS EVIDENCED
BY THE FULL SUPPORT PROVIDED BY THE CC FOR HIS
LATEST INITIATIVE.BEAUDRY

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